

**§ 955.9 Hearing election.**

Upon receipt of respondent's answer or the notice referred to in the last sentence of § 955.7(b), appellant shall advise whether he desires a hearing as prescribed in §§ 955.18 through 955.26, or whether, in the alternative, he elects to submit his case on the record without a hearing, as prescribed in § 955.12. In appropriate cases, the appellant shall also elect whether he desires the optional small claims (expedited) procedure or accelerated procedure prescribed in § 955.13.

[41 FR 7408, Feb. 18, 1976, as amended at 60 FR 57938, Nov. 24, 1995]

**§ 955.10 Prehearing briefs.**

Based on an examination of the documentation described in § 955.5, the pleadings, and a determination of whether the arguments and authorities addressed to the issues are adequately set forth therein, the Board may, in its discretion, require the parties to submit prehearing briefs in any case in which a hearing has been elected pursuant to § 955.9. In the absence of a Board requirement therefor, either party may, in its discretion and upon appropriate and sufficient notice to the other party, furnish a prehearing brief to the Board. In any case where a prehearing brief is submitted, it shall be furnished so as to be received by the Board at least 15 days prior to the date set for hearing, and a copy shall simultaneously be furnished to the other party as previously arranged.

**§ 955.11 Prehearing or presubmission conference.**

Whether the case is to be submitted pursuant to § 955.12, or heard pursuant to §§ 955.18 through 955.26, the Board may upon its own initiative or upon the application of either party, call upon the parties to appear before a Board Member for a conference to consider:

- (a) The simplification or clarification of the issues;
- (b) The possibility of obtaining stipulations, admissions, agreements on documents, understandings on matters already of record, or similar agreements which will avoid unnecessary proof;

(c) The limitation of the number of expert witnesses, or avoidance of similar cumulative evidence, if the case is to be heard;

(d) The possibility of agreement disposing of all or any of the issues in dispute; and

(e) Such other matters as may aid in the disposition of the appeal.

The results of the conference shall be reduced to writing by the Board Member and this writing shall thereafter constitute part of the record.

**§ 955.12 Submission without a hearing.**

Either party may elect to waive a hearing and to submit his case upon the record before the Board, as settled pursuant to § 955.14. Submission of the case without hearing does not relieve the parties from the necessity of proving the facts supporting their allegations or defenses. Affidavits, depositions, admissions, answers to interrogatories, and stipulations may be employed to supplement other documentary evidence in the Board record. The Board may permit such submission to be supplemented by oral argument (transcribed if requested), and by briefs arranged in accordance with § 955.24.

**§ 955.13 Optional small claims (expedited) and accelerated procedures.**

(a) These procedures are available solely at the election of the appellant.

(b) Elections to Utilize SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) and ACCELERATED Procedure.

(1) In appeals where the amount in dispute is \$50,000 or less, the appellant may elect to have the appeal processed under a small claims (expedited) procedure requiring decision of the appeal, whenever possible, within 120 days after the Board receives written notice of the appellant's election to utilize this procedure. The details of this procedure appear in paragraph (c) of this section. An appellant may elect the ACCELERATED procedure rather than the SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) procedure for any appeal eligible for the SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) procedure.

(2) In appeals where the amount in dispute is \$100,000 or less, the appellant may elect to have the appeal processed

under an accelerated procedure requiring the decision of the appeal, whenever possible, within 180 days after the Board receives written notice of the appellant's election to utilize this procedure. The details of this procedure appear in paragraph (d) of this section.

(3) The appellant's election of either the SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) procedure or the ACCELERATED procedure may be made either in his notice of appeal or by other written notice at any time thereafter.

(4) In deciding whether the SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) procedure or the ACCELERATED procedure is applicable to a given appeal the Board shall determine the amount in dispute by adding the amount claimed by the appellant against the respondent to the amount claimed by respondent against the appellant. If either party making a claim against the other party does not otherwise state in writing the amount of its claim, the amount claimed by such party shall be the maximum amount which such party represents in writing to the Board that it can reasonably expect to recover against the other.

(c) The SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) Procedure.

(1) This procedure shall apply only to appeals where the amount in dispute is \$50,000 or less as to which the appellant has elected the small claims (expedited) procedure.

(2) In cases proceeding under the SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) procedure, the following time periods shall apply (i) within ten days from the respondent's first receipt from either the appellant or the Board of a copy of the appellant's notice of election of the SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) procedure, the respondent shall send the Board a copy of the contract, the contracting officer's final decision, and the appellant's claim letter or letters, if any; (ii) within 5 days after the Board has acknowledged receipt of the notice of election, either party desiring an oral hearing shall so inform the Board. If either party requests an oral hearing, the Board shall promptly schedule such a hearing for a mutually convenient time consistent with administrative due process and the 120-day limit for a decision, at a place de-

termined under §955.18. If a hearing is not requested by either party within the time prescribed by this Rule, the appeal shall be deemed to have been submitted under §955.12 without a hearing.

(3) In cases proceeding under the SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) procedure, pleadings, discovery, and other prehearing activity will be allowed only as consistent with the requirement to conduct the hearing on the date scheduled or, if no hearing is scheduled, to close the record on a date that will allow decision within the 120-day limit. The Board, in its discretion, may shorten time periods prescribed elsewhere in these Rules as necessary to enable the Board to decide the appeal within 120 days after the Board has received the appellant's notice of election of the SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) procedure. In so doing the Board may reserve whatever time up to 30 days it considers necessary for preparation of the decision.

(4) Written decision by the Board in cases processed under the SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) procedure will be short and contain only summary findings of fact and conclusions. Decisions will be rendered for the Board by a single Administrative Judge. If there has been a hearing, the Administrative Judge presiding at the hearing may, in his discretion, at the conclusion of the hearing and after entertaining such oral arguments as he deems appropriate, render on the record oral summary findings of fact, conclusions, and a decision of the Appeal. Whenever such an oral decision is rendered, the Board will subsequently furnish the parties a typed copy of such oral decision for the record and payment purposes and for the establishment of the commencement date of the period for filing a motion for reconsideration under §955.30.

(5) Decisions of the Board under the SMALL CLAIMS (EXPEDITED) procedure will not be published, will have no value as precedents, and in the absence of fraud, cannot be appealed.

(d) The ACCELERATED Procedure

(1) This procedure shall apply only to appeals where the amount in dispute is \$100,000 or less as to which the appellant has made the requisite election.

(2) In cases proceeding under the ACCELERATED procedure, the parties are encouraged, to the extent possible consistent with adequate presentation of their factual and legal positions, to waive pleadings, discovery, and briefs. The Board, in its discretion, may shorten time periods prescribed elsewhere in these Rules as necessary to enable the Board to decide the appeal within 180 days after the Board has received the appellant's notice of election of the ACCELERATED procedure, and may reserve 30 days for preparation of the decision.

(3) Written decisions by the Board in cases processed under the ACCELERATED procedure will normally be short and contain only summary findings of fact and conclusions. Decisions will be rendered for the Board by a single Administrative Judge with the concurrence of the Chairman or Vice Chairman or other designated Administrative Judge, or by a majority among these two and an additional designated member in case of disagreement. Alternatively, in cases where the amount in dispute is \$50,000 or less as to which the accelerated procedure has been elected and in which there has been a hearing, the single Administrative Judge presiding at the hearing may, with the concurrence of both parties, at the conclusion of the hearing and after entertaining such oral arguments as he deems appropriate, render on the record oral summary findings of fact, conclusions, and a decision of the appeal. Whenever such an oral decision is rendered, the Board will subsequently furnish the parties a typed copy of such oral decision for record and payment purposes and to establish the date of commencement of the period for filing a motion for reconsideration under § 955.30.

(e) Motions for Reconsideration in Cases Arising Under § 955.13. Motions for Reconsideration of cases decided under either the small claims (expedited) procedure or the accelerated procedure need not be decided within the time periods prescribed by this § 955.13 for the initial decision of the appeal, but all such motions shall be processed and decided rapidly so as to fulfill the intent of this section.

(f) Except as herein modified, the rules of this part 955 otherwise apply in all aspects.

[44 FR 13014, Mar. 9, 1979; 44 FR 23828, Apr. 23, 1979. Redesignated and amended at 60 FR 57939, Nov. 24, 1995]

**§ 955.14 Settling the record.**

(a) The record upon which the Board's decision will be rendered consists of the appeal file described in § 955.5, and to the extent the following items have been filed, pleadings, prehearing conference memoranda or orders, prehearing briefs, depositions or interrogatories received in evidence, admissions, stipulations, transcripts of conferences and hearings, hearing exhibits, posthearing briefs, and documents which the Board has specifically designated be made a part of the record. The record will at all reasonable times be available for inspection by the parties at the office of the Board.

(b) Except as the Board may otherwise order in its discretion, no proof shall be received in evidence after completion of an oral hearing or, in cases submitted on the record, after notification by the Board that the case is ready for decision.

(c) The weight to be attached to any evidence of record will rest within the sound discretion of the Board. The Board may in any case require either party, with appropriate notice to the other party, to submit additional evidence on any matter relevant to the appeal.

**§ 955.15 Discovery—depositions.**

(a) *General policy and protective orders.* The parties are encouraged to engage in voluntary discovery procedures. In connection with any deposition or other discovery procedure, the Board may make any order which justice requires to protect a party or person from annoyance, embarrassment, oppression, or undue burden or expense, and those orders may include limitations on the scope, method, time and place for discovery, and provisions for protecting the secrecy of confidential information or documents.

(b) *When depositions permitted.* After an appeal has been docketed and complaint filed, the parties may mutually